

New Hampshire Climate Change Action Plan

Action Plan Development Process

This memo lays out the framework for developing a concrete and implementable New Hampshire Climate Change Action Plan that includes aggressive but achievable state climate change goals. The process outlined below has been designed to enable the Climate Change Policy Task Force to assess the range of actions that the Working Groups will develop in the coming months.

General Process

The Action Plan development process has relied on the Working Groups in the initial phases to identify the climate change mitigation and adaptation actions of high interest and to refine the corresponding policy/program design and implementation strategies. The work will later shift to the Task Force, which will develop a list of potential recommended actions and which will ultimately develop and approve the final Climate Change Action Plan. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) has provided support throughout the process.

The Climate Change Policy Task Force did not establish aspirational goals for the State's total CO₂ emissions at the outset of the process. Instead, the Task Force is first focusing on identifying the information needed to determine the most appropriate goals for New Hampshire. This has included input from the Working Groups and analysis by Carbon Solutions New England (CSNE) and this information is being developed in an iterative fashion.

The Working Groups began by identifying those actions that will lead to the maximum achievable reductions in (1) CO₂ emissions or (2) vulnerability to climate change impacts. The Working Groups prioritized these lists of actions from high to low interest and then evaluated the technical, economic, statutory/regulatory and social potential for implementation for each action in order of priority. The focus on potential is not to restrict the number of actions considered but to determine which actions can be taken in the near-term and to identify the obstacles that must be overcome to achieve advanced reductions in the future.

The Working Groups used this evaluation to complete a detailed set of policy/program designs and implementation strategies, called "*Action Reports*," for as many actions as time and resources allow based on a standard template. Those actions that have been evaluated and have Actions Reports completed for submittal will then be categorized as follows:

1. Actions that have a high potential for successful implementation.
2. Actions that have a medium potential for successful implementation due to a low degree or number of technical, economic, statutory/regulatory or social obstacles.
3. Actions that have a low potential for successful implementation due to a higher degree or number of technical, economic, statutory/regulatory or social obstacles.

These categories will be used to identify those actions that could be immediately undertaken (High Potential in 1, above) to achieve reductions in CO₂ emissions or vulnerability to climate change impacts. The list will also be used to identify the challenges that would need to be overcome and the questions that would need to be answered in order to implement the medium and low potential actions and achieve further reductions.

The combined impacts of the achievable CO₂ emission reductions will be used to quantify the gap between what New Hampshire can achieve and the goals advocated by scientists, policy makers and the surrounding states. To close this gap, the Working Groups will identify the obstacles that limit greater state action and prevent further reductions. This obstacle analysis will enable the determination of an additional set of actions necessary to overcome those impediments and enable the achievement of more substantial emissions reductions in the near and long-term.

Schedule

In mid-April, NHDES assembled an “Interim Report” for the Task Force. The interim report will include the summary description of each action that was on the list of actions being analyzed by each Work Group. This interim report was intended to solicit feedback from the Task Force regarding whether further actions should be considered. The timing of this feedback was necessary for the Working Groups to include any additional actions in their final analyses. In addition, the interim report was used by NHDES staff to identify those actions that overlap between groups and thereby help to streamline the last stages of the action development process.

In early May, NHDES collected the draft Action Reports from the Work Groups even though they were still awaiting final input from CSNE and other sources. These draft Action Reports were sent to the Task Force for a preliminary review. The Task Force was asked to complete an on-line survey as to which actions, at this point in time, merited further consideration, did not merit further consideration, or needed more information before further consideration is warranted. The survey results were used to shape the content and format of the third Task Force meeting on May 19, 2008. At this meeting, the Task Force members participating in the Working Groups, with support from the NHDES facilitators, conducted a discussion of the specific actions that require further consideration according to the survey results.

Using the feedback from the May 19 meeting, the Working Groups will now finish the development of the Action Reports that they will submit to the Task Force. This final stage of the Working Group process will be coordinated with NHDES and with the technical consultant, CSNE, in an iterative fashion by the end of July.

CSNE will then complete another round of analysis for the CO₂ emission reductions and the economic costs and savings associated with those actions that are quantifiable. CSNE will give priority to the analysis of the Action Reports for those Working Groups that wish to review and comment on any analysis one final time. CSNE will provide this interim round of analysis by Wednesday, July 16, and the Working Groups will each provide comments to CSNE by Wednesday, July 23rd.

The Action Reports, including CSNE analysis, will be completed and presented to the Task Force at its fourth meeting on Monday, **August 11, 2008**. At this meeting, CSNE will present the projected CO₂ emission reductions and costs for the actions proposed by each Working Group and the projected CO₂ emission reductions of the total suite of actions under consideration. During a review of the design and analysis of the Action Reports for each Working Group, the Task Force will identify any remaining quantification questions as well as the potential barriers to implementation. CSNE will be asked to revisit any analyses as needed.

On Friday, September 12, 2008, the Task Force will hold its fifth meeting to begin to develop the draft Action Plan goals and a draft implementation plan. This will be accomplished by sorting the actions by the timing of their impacts (short, medium, and long-term) and their potential for successful implementation. This categorization will assist in the development of the short and mid-term goals for the Action Plan.

In mid-September, NHDES will release for public comment the Action Reports that have been developed for consideration by the Task Force. Accompanying these reports will be specific, yet to be identified, questions to which the public can respond and provide insight. Comments on the Action Reports will be gathered at public hearings conducted at several locations around the state. Comments may also be submitted via mail and email for a specified length of time.

On Friday, October 10, 2008, the Task Force will meet to review the public comments regarding the draft Action Reports. These comments will be used to refine the draft goals and implementation strategy for the Action Plan. The Task Force will use this discussion to develop a set of Actions for further review and will instruct NHDES to develop an integrated analysis and report on the economic costs and savings and the CO₂ reductions associated with those actions.

On Friday, November 21, 2008, the Task Force will meet for the seventh and final time to review the integrated analysis. During this review, the Task Force will consider the projected impact of the remaining actions and determine which actions should be recommended to reduce the state's emissions and vulnerability to climate change impacts while helping the state to become more competitive and to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

NHDES will use the Task Force's decisions to complete a draft Action Plan. The plan will map out an integrated implementation approach focused on the actions that New Hampshire can take to reduce emissions and vulnerability to climate change impacts now, as well as the actions that would require additional measures to become achievable and result in long-term, large scale reductions. The revised Plan will be submitted electronically to the Task Force members for their review on two separate occasions, and comments will be integrated by NHDES after each iteration.

Following this review cycle, NHDES will complete the final Action Report and submit it to the Task Force members to approve and submit it to the Governor by mid-December, 2008. The completed plan will provide a blueprint for what all of New Hampshire can do to reduce GHG emissions, including specific action steps for energy generators, industry, businesses, government, educators, and homeowners.



